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ty artifices, while the state sunk gradually through their machinations into a state of corruption and debility, under which it could no longer exist, and from which it had not strength to extricate itself. Of the dreadful consequences of such a train of perverted policy, successively conducting it through the extremes of vice and anarchy and slavery in every shape, we of the present day are destined to be the spectators.

For the *Belfast Monthly Magazine*.

ANECDOTES OF INDIAN MUSICK.

BY W. OUSELEY, ESQUIRE.

WHEN I first resolved to apply myself to the study of the fine arts, as cultivated among the Persians, I solicited from various correspondents, settled in the East, the communication of such books and original information on those subjects as their situation might enable them to procure, whilst I availed myself of every opportunity that offered in this country to increase my collection of Oriental manuscripts.

With two fine copies of Sadi's *Gulistān* and *Bostān*, which once belonged to the celebrated *Chardin*, I have lately been so fortunate as to purchase a short, but very curious essay on *Persian Musick*, which from many circumstances I am willing to persuade myself was brought to Europe by that ingenious Orientalist, and is the same manuscript of which he laments that he had not procured the explanation while at *Isfahan*. But as my design in the present essay relates only to the musick of *Hindoostan*, I shall proceed to mention, that among several books sent to me from that country, some, though written in the Persian language, profess to be translated from the Sanscrit, and treat of the musical modes, the *Raug*s and *Raugnees* of the *Hindus*. From these, however, so little has been borrowed in the course of the following remarks, that if any thing curious or entertaining should be found in them, the thanks of the reader will be principally due to my brother Mr. Gore Ouseley, whom a residence of several years in India has rendered perfectly acquainted with the theory and practice of *Hindu Musick*.

By him were communicated the Indian airs, and drawings of musical instruments: I can only boast of having compiled from his letters: of having deciphered (not without difficulty) the notation of the *Ramgully*, and translated a few passages from a Persian manuscript treatise on musick, which I shall mention hereafter, and for the perusal of which I am indebted to the politeness of Sir George Staunton.

On the subject of those ancient and extraordinary melodies, which the *Hindus* call *Raug*s and *Raugnees*, the popular traditions are as numerous and romantic, as the powers ascribed to them are miraculous. Of the six *Raug*s, the five first owe their origin to the God *Mahadeo*, who produced them from his five heads. *Parbuttee* his wife constructed the sixth; and the thirty *Raugnees* were composed by *Brimhu*. Thus, of celestial invention, these melodies are of a peculiar genus: and of the three ancient genera of the Greeks resemble most the *Enharmonick*; the more modern compositions are of that species termed *Diatonick*.

A considerable difficulty is found in setting to musick the *Raug*s and *Raugnees*, as our system does not supply notes or signs sufficiently expressive of the almost imperceptible elevations and depressions of the voice in these melodies; of which the time is broken and irregular, the modulations frequent and very wild. Whatever magick was in the touch when Orpheus swept his lyre, or Timotheus filled his softly breathing flute, the effects said to have been produced by two of the six *Raug*s, are even more extraordinary than any of those ascribed to the modes of the ancients. *Mia Tonsine*, a wonderful musician in the time of king *Akber* sung one of the *Night Raug*s at mid-day: the powers of his musick were such that it instantly became night, and the darkness extended in a circle round the palace as far as the sound of his voice could be heard.

There is a tradition, that whoever shall attempt to sing the *Raug Dheepuck* is to be destroyed by fire. The Emperor *Akber* ordered *Naik Gopaul*, a celebrated musician, to sing that *Raug*: he endeavoured to excuse

himself, but in vain; the Emperor insisted on obedience: he therefore requested permission to go home and bid farewell to his family and friends. It was winter when he returned, after an absence of six months. Before he began to sing he placed himself in the waters of the *Jumna* till they reached his neck. As soon as he had performed a strain or two the river gradually became hot; at length began to boil; and the agonies of the unhappy musician were nearly insupportable. Suspending for a moment the melody thus cruelly extorted, he sued for mercy from the Monarch, but sued in vain. *Akber* wished to prove more strongly the powers of this Raug: *Naik Gopaul* renewed the fatal song: flames burst with violence from his body, which, though immersed in the waters of the *Jumna*, was consumed to ashes!

These, and other anecdotes of the same nature, are related by many of the Hindus, and implicitly believed by some. The effect produced by the *Maig Mullaar* Raug was immediate rain. And it is told, that a singing girl once, by exerting the powers of her voice in this Raug, drew down from the clouds timely and refreshing showers on the parched rice-crops of Bengal, and thereby averted the horrors of famine from the *Paradise of Regions*. An European, in that country, inquiring after those whose musical performance might produce similar effects, is gravely told, "that the art is now almost lost; but that there are still musicians possessed of those wonderful powers in the West of India." But if one inquires in the West, they say, "that if any such performers remain they are to be found only in Bengal."

Of the present musick and the sensations it excites, one can speak with greater accuracy. "Many of the Hindu melodies" (to use the words of an excellent musician) "possess the plaintive simplicity of the Scotch and Irish, and others a wild originality, pleasing beyond description."

Counterpoint seems not to have entered, at any time, into the system of Indian Musick. It is not alluded to in the manuscript treatises which I have hitherto perused, nor have I discovered that any of our original Orien-

talists speak of it as being known in Hindostan. The books, however, which treat of the musick of that country are numerous and curious. Sir William Jones mentions the works of *Amin*, a musician; the *Damodara*, the *Narayan*, the *Ragurnava*, (or sea of passions;) the *Sabhavinoda* (or delight of assemblies;) the *Ragavibodha*, (or doctrine of musical modes) the *Ratnacara*, and many other *Sanscrit* and *Hindustani* treatises. There is besides the *Raugaderpun* (or mirror of Raugs) translated into Persian by *Fuker Ullah* from an Hindovee Book on the Science of Musick, called *Muncuttuhub*, compiled by order of *Man Sing*, *Rajah of Gualier*. The *Sungeet Derpun* (or mirror of melody) is also a Persian translation from the *Sanscrit*. To these I am enabled to add, by the kindness of the learned Baronet whom I have before mentioned, the title of another Hindovee work translated by *Deenanaut*, the son of *Bausdeheo*, into the Persian language on the first of the month *Ramazan*, in the year of the *Hegira*, 1137, of our æra 1724.

"An Essay on the Science of Musick, translated from the book *Paur-jauthuck*: the object of which is to teach the understanding of the *Raug*s and *Raugnees*, and the playing upon musical instruments."

Oriental Collections.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

IN looking over your last month's Magazine, I see an article offered to the public, with an intent to set the character of Lawrence Sterne in a new point of view; but to those that wish not to meet an old friend with a new face, or see a character traduced, when deprived of the natural means of justifying itself, such anecdotes will, I am well convinced, afford but a poor repast. Sterne, no doubt, had his enemies as well as his friends, and most probably both in the extreme, which exquisite feelings generally produce; but can any thing now introduced, as *York scandal*, tend to prove his *want of feeling*, or set his character in a new point of view, in those